



SAMMY AWARD WINNERS FOR 2005

Firefighters Hatchery

Each spring during the last 20 years, third graders from Maple Grove Primary School in Battle Ground have learned about the salmon life cycle from a unique source—firefighters. Two decades ago, a group of firefighters now with the Vancouver Fire Department set up a small hatchery in response to a call for help in restoring local fish populations. Not long after this volunteer project began the firefighters chose to actively involve primary school students in the release of the fry. According to third grade teacher Gail Stuenkel, the field trip with the firefighters is the trip the students look forward to the most during the school year. Firefighters Mike Senchyna, Curt Anderson, and others also visit the school to help students learn about the salmon life cycle and understand the importance of local tributaries to the survival of fish. Thanks to the firefighters, Maple Grove school, and the hatchery property owner, Dr. Robert Nicol, students are developing the knowledge about salmon that is key to the long-term survival of these fish.

Mill Creek Forest Homeowners Association

When David Gilroy and his neighbors originally moved into their homes near the Washington State University Campus, the unnamed creek and wetlands of their commons area was choked with blackberries and assorted debris that ranged from old culverts and car hoods to plywood signs. Twelve families joined together to form the Mill Creek Forest Homeowners Association to restore the commons area back to its natural state. They replaced huge quantities of blackberry brambles with native vegetation and constructed maintenance trails that would also let neighbors enjoy the habitat area. They removed truckloads of debris including a silt fence in and along the creek. Benefits of the restoration were soon apparent as streamside erosion subsided and more wildlife was observed in the restored habitat. With one reported salmon sighting, David Gilroy and his neighbors are hopeful that their efforts will contribute to a return of fish to these waters.

Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board

The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board was established in 1998 by state law to restore salmon, steelhead, and other fish species in the lower Columbia listed under the Endangered Species Act to healthy, harvestable levels. Last December, the Board completed the first regional recovery plan for salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest. Governor Gary Locke presented the plan to National Marine Fisheries Service, which will officially adopt the plan. Putting the plan together required extraordinary coordination and cooperation among the many entities involved, including private citizens; tribal members; local, state and federal agencies; and various



interest groups. It took about six years and more than 200 meetings to develop the science-based plan. The plan is a blueprint for better coordination of salmon recovery efforts. Thanks to the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, individuals and groups acting to save fish can be more confident of the results, knowing that many others are also doing their part.

Dan Balch

As an avid fisherman, Dan Balch wants to ensure others can also continue to enjoy the thrill of catching salmon. The retired reforestation manager likes to take his grandchildren and great-grandchildren to fish at some of the same spots along the Lewis River where he fished as a boy. An original member of Fish First, Dan spends many volunteer hours working on fish and habitat restoration projects. He helps with the nutrient enhancement program, putting salmon carcasses back into the stream where they are an important element of stream-side ecology. He also oversees the net pen projects at Echo Park and at Lake Merwin, where he gets great enjoyment out of feeding the fish. Dan's efforts ensure that tens of thousands of fish are released into Lake Merwin each year, supplying a sport and commercial harvest need. Whether he's helping to hatch fry at remote site incubators or organizing volunteer work parties, Dan Balch is always ready to contribute his time, knowledge, and talent in an effort to promote salmon recovery.

USFW & PacTrust

When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Vancouver office moved into the Columbia Tech Center last June, landscaping outside the building had not been established. Fish and wildlife staff saw an opportunity: why not set an example by landscaping with salmon friendly native vegetation? They proposed the idea to PacTrust, the center's property management company. Despite initial reservations, PacTrust agreed to give it a try. Fish and Wildlife employees and their families volunteered to do the planting themselves. Employees also brought in snags and root balls from the field to complete the landscape plan, which was designed for free by Bosky Dell Natives of West Linn, Oregon. With the landscape now established, employees help with ongoing maintenance, pulling weeds by hand to prevent the use of toxic chemicals. PacTrust workers also spend extra time pulling weeds by hand. Landscaping with native plants instead of lawns reduces the use of pesticides and fertilizers that can end up in our streams and rivers. US Fish and Wildlife and PacTrust are showing others in the community what can be done to keep our waterways cleaner for salmon.



Robert J. Darling

For many decades, cattle wandered freely through the section of Mill Creek that runs through the Darling Farm, once one of the largest dairy operations in Clark County. Coho, steelhead, and sea run cutthroat trout trying to use the upper portions of the stream with good habitat have had to run the farm's 3,000-foot gauntlet of eroding banks and a channel choked with Reed canary grass. Now, thanks to Robert Darling, their journey will be easier. Mr. Darling contacted Clark Public Utilities to restore riparian habitat along the creek he used to explore as a child. As a result, the creekside has been replanted with more than 30,000 native plants and trees. Large woody debris and spawning gravel has been added to the creek to enhance fish habitat. Thanks to aerial photography, the creek's original meander pattern was determined and reestablished. Mr. Darling also set aside and fenced 26 acres of habitat to keep the beef cattle currently grazing the site away from the creek. By dedicating such a large portion of his property for salmon habitat, Robert Darling has done a great service for his community.

Wood's Landing

Woods Landing is located just half a mile upriver from the busy Interstate-205 Bridge. It may seem an unlikely place for chum salmon to spawn, but in fact, Wood's Landing is one of the last three remaining natural spawning grounds in the Lower Columbia River basin for these threatened fish. Of the four parcels that make up the Woods Landing Preservation Project, three have been conserved through major efforts of the Erskine Biddle Wood family, the Columbia Land Trust, and other community partners. The fourth parcel, however, was proposed to be subdivided and developed. But in February, 2004, the owners of the 4.5 acre parcel gave the Wood family one year to secure a funding package to purchase it. The Woods family spearheaded a grass-roots fund-raising effort and met with local, regional, state, and national leaders to generate support for acquiring the parcel. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the Woods family, the parcel was purchased for preservation in March, 2005, ensuring that Woods Landing will provide vital habitat for chum salmon into the foreseeable future.



